

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2013

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

We are writing in strong support of Assembly Bill 639 (AB 639), the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Act, which was authored by Speaker John A. Pérez. We understand you are currently considering a number of bills for signature and wish to highlight this bill because of the compelling needs of veterans it will address.

California is home to almost two million veterans—more than any other state in the nation. With the winding down of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, our state must be prepared to not only welcome our veterans home, but to stand ready to assist them with their many needs: physical rehabilitation, employment, mental health care, and housing.

We are keenly aware that California also leads the nation in the number of homeless veterans. Approximately 25 percent of our nation's homeless veterans live in California, accounting for roughly 19,000. AB 639 will provide a significant infusion of funds to address this crushing and embarrassing crisis.

As you know, AB 639 will seek voter approval in the June 2014 statewide election to restructure \$600 million in existing Proposition 12 bond funds and use them to construct and/or rehabilitate multifamily housing for veterans and their families. Currently veterans are restricted to buying single family homes and farms with Proposition 12 funds. With the changing demographics of our veteran population the repurposed funding will better serve today's veterans, especially our women veterans and their families, by providing them with more housing options.

Since the passage of Proposition 12 in 2008, none of the \$900 million approved by the voters of our state has been spent. AB 639 will dedicate \$600 million of these existing funds from Proposition 12 and allow them to be used in more useful ways to serve our nation's veterans. AB 639 focuses on housing homeless veterans, veterans at risk of becoming homeless, veterans struggling with physical injuries, unemployment and those in need of mental health and substance abuse treatment.

In addition to providing supportive and transitional housing, AB 639 is fiscally and economically prudent. Homeless veterans can too often cycle in and out of our jail systems, emergency rooms and treatment programs. Public costs will decrease when veterans have homes and needed services.

We urge you to sign AB 639 into law so that we may utilize dormant public funds to serve our nation's veterans with the supportive housing they so deserve.

Sincerely,




HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress



JEFF DENHAM
Member of Congress



TONY CÁRDENAS
Member of Congress



SUSAN DAVIS
Member of Congress



BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



JANICE HAHN
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JARED HUFFMAN
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JULIA BROWNLEY
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GLORIA NEGRETE-MCLEOD
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ALAN LOWENTHAL
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GEORGE MILLER
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BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress



MIKE HONDA
Member of Congress

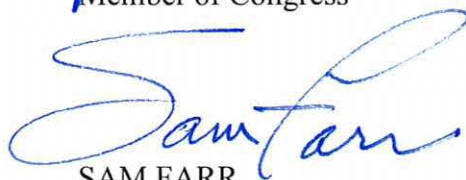

KAREN BASS
Member of Congress



SCOTT PETERS
Member of Congress


LORETTA SANCHEZ
Member of Congress



JUAN VARGAS
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ZOE LOFGREN
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DORIS MATSUI
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